

Accessing FamilySearch Digital Images

FamilySearch “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you how to access FamilySearch digital image collections.



INTRODUCTION


New records that are currently being filmed throughout the world are now only captured digitally. Additionally, many microfilms have been digitized and placed online at FamilySearch.org. To access these vast image resources, you must know how to locate and navigate these collections. There are two ways to access the browse image collections on FamilySearch.org. One is through the FamilySearch catalog. The other way is to use the map found on the Search page. This guide will teach you both ways.

HOW TO

Using the FamilySearch Catalog to Access Images

1. On the home page of FamilySearch.org, hover over the word **Search** and then click on the word **Catalog** in the drop-down menu.
2. Enter the name of a place in the search field located immediately below the word **Place**. As you begin to enter the name of a place, the system will prompt you with possible matches. Choose the match that fits the location you need. Localities are listed in order from largest to smallest jurisdiction. For example: Country, province, city, then parish.
3. Click on **Search**.
4. Click on the type of records you wish to search.
5. Click on the record title. This is usually in blue.
6. Scroll down the page to the **Film Notes** section. Use the following key to determine if the records you wish to view have been indexed and/or are available online.

Key to FamilySearch Catalog icons		
	Magnifying glass icon: Some or all of the records from this microfilm are indexed (searchable by name).	Click on the magnifying glass icon to search by name in this specific microfilm. The new window and search engine that opens will only search the microfilm you have chosen. Once the window has opened, enter the name you wish to search in the appropriate search boxes on the left side of the page.
	Camera icon: Records are digitized and online.	Click on the camera icon for the microfilm you wish to view. The images will open on your screen in thumbnail form. For further instructions on how to navigate the images, see the Browse Image Tips and Tools section below.

	Microfilm roll icon: Records are on microfilm.	If the icon is not accompanied by a camera icon or a magnifying glass icon, the only way to view these records is in a FamilySearch center with a microfilm reader.
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Please note: Before clicking on the camera icon, look to see if there is an item number for the collection of records you wish to view. You will need to advance to that item number in the images to begin your search in that section of the microfilm.

Digital Images Only Collections

Some records in the catalog are only available as digital images. These catalog entries contain DGS numbers, typically beginning with a 4, 5, 7, or 8. Under the heading "Collection/Shelf", it will say "Digital". Other catalog entries have no numbers at all. In the absence of microfilm numbers follow these steps:

1. You will see a sentence similar to this: **To view digital images of this [Location], click [here](#). Not available on microfilm.** Click on the word "here" within the sentence. This link will take you to the title page of the collection.
2. Click on the words **Browse through ... images**.
3. Choose the location, beginning with the largest jurisdiction, until you arrive at the town or parish level
4. Choose the record type and date range that fits with what you are seeking. These steps are almost identical to steps 5-8 below in the section **Using the Map to Access Images**.

Using the Map to Access Images

1. On the home page of FamilySearch.org, hover over the word **Search** and then click on **Records** from the drop-down menu.
2. Go to the map and click on the country or geographical region desired.
3. Choose the name of the country or state from the drop-down menu.
4. Generally speaking, the top half of this page, called **[Location] Indexed Historical Records**, contains the first five collections where **some** or **all** of the records have been indexed; to see all collections, click on the words **Show all ... Collections** under the list. The bottom half of the page, called **[Location] Image Only Historical Records**, contains browse image only collections; none of these records have been indexed. Click on the name of the collection you wish to view.
5. Click on **Browse through ... images**.
6. Choose the location, beginning with the largest jurisdiction, until you get to the town or parish level.
7. Select the record type and the year range that fits the event for the ancestor you seek.
8. Browse through the images until you arrive at the desired date. **Note:** You can jump through the records by entering an image number or by advancing page by page using the small arrows on either side of the image number.
9. To view a specific image, double click on the thumbnail you wish to view. You can also navigate through the thumbnails by changing the image number or scrolling down the page.

Tips for Using the Image Browser

- When accessing images via the map, begin by searching for the locality. Start with the largest jurisdiction and drilling down to the smallest. For example: State or country > county or province > city > parish. If you are unsure how to spell the name of the town or city you need, but know the name of the state or province, begin by searching for the state or province. Once your results come up, click on the option to view **Places within ...** This will provide you with a list of localities from which to choose the correct town or city.
- You can browse forward or backward in an image set using the small arrows that appear on either side of the words **Image ... of ...**. The arrow pointing to the right is to advance. The arrow pointing to the left is to go backwards. You can also enter an image number and click on Enter to advance to that image number.
- To use the tools to improve the image quality, click on **Tools** on the right side of the page and you will see various options. To adjust the brightness or contrast of the image, click on **Adjust Image** and then use the slider and then click on **Apply** when the image appears as you wish. Other tools allow you to rotate the image to the left 90 degrees or Invert the image from black on white to white on black.
- When viewing just one image, you can return to the thumbnails by clicking on the symbol to the left of your screen that shows a grouping of small white blocks.
- Search in handwritten indexes first, if any, but remember the page number in the index rarely corresponds to the image number. You may be able to spot an index from the thumbnails as it will appear differently than the rest of the records.
- Begin with date of the event (birth, marriage, death) working forward in time. The records are normally in chronological order by the date of the event or of the registration. If the event is not on the date expected, try searching a few years before or a few years after.
- Occasionally, you may find a browse image collection that is not in the catalog. Check for digital collections using both the catalog and the map before deciding there are no digital image collections for your locality.

Saving Images

You can save images in a variety of ways.

- You can click on **Attach to Family Tree** and attach the image directly to the person(s) named in the record.
- You can also save the image to your source box. Click on **Source Box** and then **Add to my Source Box**. A pop up box will appear showing the title of the collection. You may want to add the name of the person in the record at the beginning of the title so as to easily identify the person of interest from the record. You may also add the record to a specific folder in your source box by choosing the folder from the drop-down menu directly below the words **Add to Folder**.
- You may also copy the citation and paste it in a document, software program, or any other place. To do so click on **Information** at the bottom of the screen and then click on **Copy Citation**. You can then place your cursor where you want to paste the citation and right click on your mouse and choose the command Paste. You may also use the keyboard shortcut. This is done by pressing CTRL and the letter "v" at the same time.

Research Tips

- Take notes or use a research log to help you remember who, when, and where you searched.
- Be patient and don't give up.

Are the images indexed?

Many records have been indexed but are not yet connected to their images. There are two ways to tell if the images you are looking at have been indexed.

1. Using the catalog to find the records you need, look for the magnifying glass icon next to the film number. If an icon appears, you know that at least **some** of the records from that microfilm have been indexed. You can then click on the magnifying glass icon and search by name within that microfilm.

One way to tell if an entire microfilm has been indexed is to click on the camera icon for that microfilm. (Please note if there are any item numbers associated with the record set you wish to view so you can advance to that section in the image viewer.) Now that you're in the images, view the first image to locate the name of a person in the record, as well as the date of the record. Now, go to the last image in the record set and locate the name of a person in the record, as well as the date of the last record. Perform a search in the FamilySearch search engine for the both the first and last person to see if you can find the indexed information.

2. If the images you are viewing are indexed **AND** connected to their indexed information, you will see an **Image Index** at the bottom of your screen. If this tab is not expanded, click on the words **Image Index**. It should then expand into your screen. If the image has been indexed, you will see the names found on the displayed image. If there are a lot of names indexed from a record, you may have to scroll through the image index to locate the person you seek. It will also help you get a better idea of his position on the page. The farther down in the index he is, the farther down in the image he will be.

Note: If the image index obstructs your view, you can lower it any time by clicking on the **Image Index** tab.

PRACTICE

Now let's practice the principles taught above.

Example 1: Use the FamilySearch Catalog to access a digital images only collection.

Your ancestor was married in Mistretta, Messina, Italy in 1898. Use the catalog to determine if there are any indexed marriage records for 1898. In addition, follow the steps outlined above to access the images.

1. On FamilySearch.org, hover over the word **Search** and then click on **Catalog**.
2. Begin entering Mistretta in the **Place** field. When options appear, choose the option for Italy, Messina, Mistretta, and click on **Search**.

3. Click on the subject Italy, Messina, Mistretta – Civil registration (2).
4. The marriage record took place in 1898, so choose the following collection: **Italy, Messina, Mistretta, civil registration (Tribunale) = Italia, Messina, Mistretta, stato civile (Tribunale), 1866-1942**
5. This is a digital image only collection. There are no microfilms. Click on the word here in the following phrase: **To view digital images of this Italy, Messina, Mistretta, Civil Registration (Tribunale), click [here](#).**
6. Click on the words **Browse through ... images.**
7. Click on the name of the province (Provincia) Messina.
8. Click on the name of the town (Comune o frazione) Mistretta.
9. Click on Matrimoni 1898 (Marriages 1898). There are 82 images in this collection. As you look at the thumbnails, please note that the last few images appear differently. This could indicate the presence of an index. Be alert for that possibility when viewing browse image collections. Searching the index will save you time searching the entire collection page by page.

Example 2: Use the FamilySearch Catalog to determine if records have been indexed from a particular microfilm.

Your ancestor was baptized in the parish church in Apozol, Zacatecas, Mexico in 1858.

1. On FamilySearch.org, hover over the word **Search** and then click on **Catalog**.
2. Begin entering the place Apozol in the **Place** field. When options appear, choose the option for Mexico, Zacatecas, Apozol. Then click on **Search**.
3. Click on the subject Mexico, Zacatecas, Apozol – Church records (1).
4. Click on the collection **Registros parroquiales, 1855-1952**.
5. Scroll down to the **Film Notes** section. The film number with baptisms for the year 1858 is 1162591. Answer the following questions:

Are there records indexed from this microfilm?	Yes (you can tell by the presence of the magnifying glass icon).
Are there digital images for this microfilm?	Yes (You can tell by the presence of the camera icon).
How many images are included in this microfilm?	Click on the camera icon and you will see that there are 730 images in this microfilm.
Are the images tied to an index?	No (You can tell by the lack of information in the Image index at the bottom of the image viewer).

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.